

ACTON HISTORIC COMMISSION
Meeting August 24, 2010
Minutes

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Present Kathy Acerbo-Bachman (KAB), David Honn (DH), Ron Rose (RR), Michaela Moran (MM) and David Barrat (DB). Also present was Michael Gowing (MG), Board of Selectmen (BOS) Liaison.

Meeting was opened at 7:30.

Minutes of August 10, 2010: "Davad" to be changed to "David" in the first paragraph; the words "their property." to be added after "on" in the final sentence beginning "Meeting Minutes for 7/27/10." "Cosponsoring" to be changed to "Co-sponsoring" in both instances in the bulleted paragraph beginning "KAB noted that accomplish of past year include." KAB moved to accept the minutes as amended. DB seconded. Motion passed unanimously. RR will make corrections, sign as Secretary Pro Tem and submit them to the Town Clerk with copies to HDC, BOS, Building, Engineering and Planning departments.

CITIZENS CONCERNS: DH as private citizen inquired whether the HDC had asked Scott Mutch (SM) Zoning Enforcement Officer (ZEO), for an opinion on the Floor Area Ratio (FAR) of the proposed dwellings on 69-81 River Street. The Planning Department had been asked for an opinion on the FAR and it declined. There appears to be a disagreement whether it should be .2 or .4 of total lot area. DH noted that Town Counsel had prepared an extensive memo on the FAR for South Acton Village (SAV). It presented argument both pro and con for .2 vs. .4. This memo concludes that backs of sites in the SAV should be revisited by the Zoning Board of Appeals for a FAR determination. There had been insufficient dimensional information from which SM could determine what the actual FAR is. If and when plans containing actual dimensions for each house are filed with the Building Department as a part of the application for a building permit, the FAR can be determined by the ZEO. Such information may then become the basis of an appeal either by the builder or by concerned citizens. RR noted that we should request the documents filed with the Building Department in application for the building permits. He also observed that the Conservation Commission (CC) never reported back to the HDC regarding their most recent determination concerning placing the proposed foundations in or near the wetlands between River Street and Fort Pond Brook. KAB suggested that we add more columns to track activity of other departments on issues under HDC jurisdiction. KAB will ask SM to provide missing information regarding

projects such as 69-81 River Street. This will be discussed further during review of the spreadsheet.

UPDATE ON TRAIN STATION-DH; DH was asked to participate at the South Acton Train Station Advisory Committee (SATSAC) meetings as architectural advisor to review the proposed plans for the new train station. The first meeting was held ten days ago. Approximately 6 to 8 people were in attendance to offer opinions on the plans. DH was asked to assist Peter Berry in drafting a memorandum in preparation for a meeting with the MBTA (T). DH was also asked to attend this meeting. The 304 Milestone plans provided for review included a site plan, platform plan and station elevations. DH observed that there is a long list of plans that have not been submitted. Many of the details including lighting are also missing. DH reminded the others at the SATSAC meeting that this is a project requiring Section 106 review. RR noted that the T's architect will be happy to provide most of what is requested suggesting that the Town will get a less than satisfactory building.

LAND PURCHASE-DH; This is an informal committee set up by Terra Friedrichs (TF) which names four villages as objects of interest. The committee is developing criteria for selecting land and/or buildings to be purchased which would not otherwise be identified by CPC of the Open Space Committee. The goal is to identify parcels to be purchased that would preserve or enhance village character.

BOARD OF SELCETMEN OVERSIGHT; MM cited KAB's bravery for going it alone. It was noted that MM also did it alone last year. Steve Ledoux identified 4 staff available to start scanning HDC documents. Goals have been set to forge ahead. MG noted that the BOS was happy with the presentation.

8:00PM MEETING WITH BARBARA LYONS (BL). Application #1023-507 Main Street-DH Liaison;

Applicant seeks to replace the garage door with a wooden entrance door with two lights, one on either side of the door. She also wants to replace three windows with Jeld-Wen windows. Her application includes suggested models for the door and the windows. The exterior of the windows would be pre-primed, double hung with 7/8" grills on both sides of the windows. BL reports that the house is settling so much that the garage door can no longer operate. She plans to erect posts in the door's frame-work for support. The framework would conceal the posts. She conferred with Building Inspector, Frank Ramsbottom (FR), who suggested placing the posts 5' apart to minimize the settling problem. BL's plan is to mimic the actual front door. The garage door opening is wider than the door and lights she plans to use. She proposes to

fill in the remaining space with clapboards. She feels that the door to be used would provide an appropriate look.

Because of the settling, that part of the building can't be used as a garage. She cannot put a car in there. It was proposed by HDC that she use a double door instead of the proposed single door with sidelights. The cost would be about the same or perhaps slightly more. MM asked if the room could be accessed through the house. BL replied that access is through the cellar. MM observed that the sidelights would be expensive. She would prefer not to see sidelights. MG referred to another application as a possible illustration of a use of a double door. RR noted that the proposed door is an entry door opening into a garage. Its similarity to the main entrance and could be confusing. He would oppose the use of the proposed door and filling in the remaining area. It would have a "sad" look. KAB was okay with illustration MG referred to. Reference was to Application #1025 at 48 Windsor Street. MM asked if BL would leave the existing trim or remove it when filling in with matching clapboards. DH urged that the existing trim remain. Matching the clapboards to fill in the unused area would be difficult. The goal is to have the change be less jarring. The proposed door unit is estimated to cost between \$2-3 thousand dollars. The area will not be used as a garage. KAB prefers a double-door opening to the one proposed in the application. DH suggested that this opening should be a step below the main entrance to preserve visual hierarchy between it and the main entrance. MM agreed saying that it should be simpler. It would likely cost less and the sidelights would not be necessary. RR wants a drawing of the proposed doors before having to decide. KAB agreed. MG asked where the supports would come from. KAB stated that what the commission needs is a set of measured drawings showing double doors, cut sheets, illustrations of where the supports are to be placed. Cut sheets show the make and model of the door proposed for use. The meeting was continued to September 14, 2010 at 8:30PM.

MM raised the issue of the three windows to be replaced. The windows will have simulated divided lights with grills on the exterior and interior. DH requested drawings of the double doors, elevation, trim and the proposed fill-in or the area not consumed by the double doors. BL noted that the work will be in pieces; the windows need sill work to replace rotted wood, BL is planning to replace the furnace, and walls need repair. She plans to do all of the carpentry at once. She asked that the commission vote on the windows now and vote on the door at another time. The abutters have been notified. MM suggested that we separate the application onto two parts; the window project would be designated as 1023A and the door project designated as 1023B. All agreed. MM moved to approve Application of a COA for 1023A allowing for a change of the windows to Jeld-Wen windows with simulated

divided lights as shown in the application. Seconded by DB. The commission has approved this or similar model window in the past. Motion approved unanimously. DH will issue a COA on or about 8/25/10. MM thought that no building permit would be required for window replacement. FR will look for a COA however.

The commission will need drawings regarding the door replacement from contactor or BL as soon as possible. They will have to include trim and fill details. RR asked how high the opening is. DH responded that it is 80 and ½ inches. BL responded that the opening is 7'6" wide and 6'9" high. The current door is not tight, allowing for loss of energy. The meeting with BL was closed at 8:40PM.

APPLICATION SPREADSHEET-KAB; KAB asked the commission to review the information in the spreadsheet from top to bottom. MM had not seen the spreadsheet until earlier tonight. MM will fill in when COA's are or have been issued. There is a question concerning when the COA was issued to the West Acton Baptist Church.

Application #1018-West Acton Market; Applicant has applied to the BOS for a liquor license. Ask TF to contact the applicant to see what the current status is. Our meetings with them thus far were to discuss preliminary thoughts regarding proposed signs.

Application #1021-15 Chadwick Street; F. Melon will re-submit a withdrawn application. It has not been received yet.

Application #1022-6 Newtown Road; The Commission approved application for a chimney cap. KAB will send him a prototype.

Application #1023A-507 Main Street-COA approved for window replacement on 8/24/10.

Application #1022B-507 Main Street-The commission continued this to 8:30PM on 9/14.

Application 1024-Acton Women's Club (AWC)-RR reassigned from TF; Application for a handicap ramp. It is believed that AWC will apply for CPC funds. AWC requested that we decide on this matter by 11/11/10. The architect for this project is Anita Rogers, viewed favorably from prior work by the HDC. The ramp should be as unobtrusive as possible.

Application 1025-48 Windsor Avenue-Application for construction of a barn. This will require a public hearing with notice of same to be sent to the Beacon

Newspaper for hearing on either 9/21, 9/27 or 9/29. September 28, 2010 is set for a Special Town Meeting. No hearing can be held on that date. DH will communicate with the applicant.

Steven Su (SS)-14-20 School Street-Window replacement done in violation of Town By-law. DH suggested that SS replace the more visible windows first. It is estimated that the windows will cost \$3-4 hundred dollars each. It was also suggested that SS do the right-hand unit followed by the left-hand unit, all to be completed within three years. MM moved that we send SS a letter requiring that he replace no less than 4 windows a year. DB seconded the motion, which was approved unanimously. DB will send a letter to SS informing him of the action taken by the commission; SS will replace no less than four of the 13 subject windows each year until all 13 are replaced and in compliance with Town By-law.


Additional items: The commission will hold a workshop on 9/11/10. The second presentation on the new Open Meeting Law will be held on 9/15/10.

HDC Rules and Regulations-Review; MM noted that the rules and regulations included for discussion are not the current ones. This item is continued until the most current Rules and Regulations are available.

MG noted that there will be a training seminar by the Commission on Disabilities, which, he thinks, is on 9/15/2010 in conflict with the OML presentation.

Meeting adjourned at 9:15PM.

Respectfully submitted


David T. Barrat,
Secretary Pro Tem